

**Thomas Jefferson to James Wilkinson, September 20, 1807, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO THE GOVERNOR OF NEW ORLEANS J. MSS. (JAMES WILKINSON.)**

Monticello, September 20, 1807.

Dear Sir, —I received your favors of the 13 & 15th on my return to this place on the 17th, and such was the mass of business accumulated in my absence, that I have not till now been able to take up your letters. You are certainly free to make use of any of the papers we put into Mr. Hay's hands,<sup>1</sup> with a single reservation: to wit, some of them are expressed to be confidential, and others are of that kind which I always consider as confidential, conveying censure on particular individuals, & therefore never communicate them beyond the immediate executive circle. I accordingly write to this effect to Mr. Hay. The scenes which have been acted at Richmond are such as have never before been exhibited in any country where all regard to public character has not yet been thrown off. They are equivalent to a proclamation of impunity to every

<sup>1</sup> On the same day, Jefferson wrote Hay:

“ Monticello, September 20, 1807.

“ Dear Sir,—General Wilkinson has asked permission to make use, in the statement of Burr's affair which he is about to publish, of the documents placed in your hands by Mr. Rodney. To this, consent is freely given with one reservation. Some of these papers are expressed to be confidential. Others containing censures on particular individuals, are such as I always deem confidential, & therefore cannot communicate, but for regularly

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official purposes, without a breach of trust. I must therefore ask the exercise of your discretion in selecting all of this character, and of giving to the General the free use of the others. It will be necessary that the whole be returned to the Attorney General by the first week in the next month, as a selection will be made from them to make part of the whole evidence in the case, which I shall have printed and communicated to Congress. I salute you with great esteem & respect.”

traitorous combination which may be formed to destroy the Union; and they preserve a head for all such combinations as may be formed within, and a centre for all the intrigues & machinations which foreign governments may nourish to disturb us. However, they will produce an amendment to the Constitution which, keeping the judges independent of the Executive, will not leave them so, of the nation.

I shall leave this place on the 30th for Washington. It is with pleasure that I perceive from all the expressions of public sentiment, that the virulence of those whose treasons you have defeated only place you on higher ground in the opinion of the nation. I salute you with great esteem & respect.